

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, EAID, RO

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE WORLD BANK INTEREST IN ROMANIAN RIUL

MARE PROJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

REF: STATE 223734

1. DEPARTMENT AND WORLD BANK SHOULD BE AWARE THAT RIUL MARE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT WILL DESPOIL ONE OF FEW REMAINING RELATIVELY UNTOUCHED NATURAL CARPATHIAN STREAM VALLEYS. IT WILL ALSO INCLUDE A FEEDER DAM INSIDE RETEZAT NATIONAL PARK'S HERETOFORE SACROSANCT SCIENTIFIC NATURE RESERVE BELONGING TO ROMANIAN ACADEMY. LIKELY PRACTICAL EFFECT WILL BE TO DESTROY LARGE PORTION OF RESERVE CONTAINING MANGIFICENT STANDS OF ORIGINAL BEECH AND HEMLOCK FOREST STILL INHABITED BY BEAR, DEER, WOLVES AND LESSER FAUNA AND UNIQUE FLORA. IMPORTANCE OF SITE KNOWN EUROPE-WIDE. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THUS SEEMS FAR OUT OF PROPORTION TO MODEST NATIONAL KILOWATTS GAIN OR POSSIBLE MARGINAL FLOOD CONTROL. DESIRABILITY OF THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN HOTLY CONTESTED BY A FEW ACTIVIST WRITERS AND SCIENTISTS BEHIND SCENES HERE, AND WIDER CIRCLE PRIVATELY DEPLORES POTENTIAL SCIENTIFIC LOSS.

2. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS ABOVE INFORMATION TO IBRD FOR ITS CONSIDERATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE LOAN APPLICATION. WE WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED WHAT BANK'S CURRENT PRACTICES

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AND POLICIES ARE IN ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD. WE RECALL THAT,

FOR EXAMPLE, GERMAN-MARSHALL FUND STUDY IS UNDERWAY ON
DEVELOPING WAYS TO FOCUS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL
ATTENTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS. PLS ADVISE.
BARNES

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